

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1 1. A method of identifying the presence of cirrhosis of the liver in a
2 mammal, said method comprising measuring the level of YKL-40 in a biological
3 sample of the mammal and comparing the level to that of a normal, healthy mammal,
4 wherein a statistically significant difference indicates the presence of said cirrhosis.

1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the amount of YKL-40 in said
2 sample is measured using an immunoassay.

1 3. The method of claim 2, wherein the immunoassay is a
2 competitive immunoassay.

1 4. The method of claim 3, wherein the immunoassay utilizes a
2 detectable label selected from the group consisting of radioisotopes, enzymes,
3 fluorescent molecules, chemiluminescent molecules, bioluminescent molecules, and
4 colloidal metals to measure YKL-40.

1 5. The method of claim 1, wherein said mammal is a human.

1 6. The method of claim 2, wherein the immunoassay uses a
2 polyclonal antibody to measure YKL-40.

1 7. The method of claim 2, wherein the immunoassay uses a
2 monoclonal antibody to measure YKL-40.

1 8. The method of claim 1, wherein said sample is selected from the
2 group consisting of blood, plasma, and serum.

1 9. Antibodies that specifically bind to a YKL-40.

1 10. The antibodies of claim 9, wherein said antibodies are polyclonal
2 antibodies produced by immunization of a non-human mammal.

1 11. The antibodies of claim 9, wherein said antibodies are
2 monoclonal antibodies produced by hybridomas formed from cells taken from a non-
3 human mammal.

1 12. A kit for use in the detection of a disease state in a mammal
2 associated with degradation of connective tissue, said kit comprising a YKL-40
3 antibody.

1 13. The kit of claim 12, wherein said disease state is selected from
2 the group consisting of an inflammatory or degenerative joint disease, cirrhosis of the
3 liver, and metastatic cancer.

1 14. The kit of claim 12, wherein said YKL-40 antibody is a polyclonal
2 antibody.

1 15. The kit of claim 12, wherein said YKL-40 antibody is a
2 monoclonal antibody.

1 16. The kit of claim 12, further comprising immunoassay reagents.

1 17. The kit of claim 12, further comprising a detectable label.

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